

# C.O.CA. TIMES

COIN OPERATED COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Things We Do for Love ..... *by John Peterson* ..... pg 4

Gum Vender or Draw Poker ..... *by Dan Applegate* ..... pg. 6

Seventeen Collections in Four Days ..... *by Johnny Duckworth* ..... pg. 9

3 Slot Machines - 3 Restaurants ..... *by Salvatore Mazzeo* ..... pg 12

Jennings Modern Vendor ..... *by Rick Akers* ..... pg. 14

In Memory of Jim Collings ..... *by Paul Hindin* ..... pg. 17

The Regina Vendor ..... *by Roger Smith* ..... pg. 20

Chicagoland - November 2012 ..... *by Jack Kelly* ..... pg. 24

Jennings Electro-Vendor ..... *by Bill Howard* ..... pg. 28

26 Years Ago ..... *by Paul Hindin* ..... pg. 30

Brice Williams Find ..... *by John Carini* ..... pg. 31



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# C.O.C.A. TIMES

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## Message from Our President....

Hello again! It doesn't seem so long ago that I attended the first C.O.C.A. meeting, but it's been 15 years since that first meeting was held at Pheasant Run. What started as the vision of Frank DeMayo and a small group of collectors dedicated to helping make it a reality, has grown to more than 700 members, our original 4-page black and white newsletter has grown into a 36-page full color magazine, and this summer we'll hold our 10th annual convention. C.O.C.A. has grown a lot in the last 15 years and has become the premier club for collectors of coin-op devices, with members in 43 states of the U.S., in Canada, and in 9 countries overseas.

Thanks to our members who submitted nominations for the C.O.C.A. Hall of Fame Award. We received 7 nominations for 2012, with Ken Rubin and the late Bill Enes receiving majority votes of the selection committee to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. The award for Bill Enes was presented posthumously to Bill's mother-in-law, Mary Zerby, at our November meeting, but due to travel delays caused by storms on the east coast, Ken Rubin was unable to attend in November and will be presented his award at our April meeting. The award is presented annually at C.O.C.A.'s fall meeting to one or more individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the hobby of collecting coin operated machines. Nominations for award recipients will be accepted from any individual who is a Member in Good Standing (as defined in the Association's bylaws) at the time of the nomination. Nominations should include a written statement from the individual making the nomination as to the qualifications of the nominee and must be received by September 1st to be considered for 2013. For nominees who were submitted but not selected for 2012, they will remain on the list for future consideration.

Planning for our 10th Annual Convention is going well with more than 50 members already registered to attend. This year's convention, being held August 23-25, 2013 in Boston, Massachusetts, will feature four significant local collections, a Boston Harbor Dinner Cruise, meals at great local restaurants, including celebrity chef Ming Tsai's Blue Ginger Restaurant, and the opportunity to meet, renew friendships, and socialize with fellow C.O.C.A. members. For further in-

formation on the convention, the flyer and registration form is posted on our website and also accompanies C.O.C.A. TIMES, or contact Marsha Blau at FoxSnake@aol.com. Hope to see you all there!

I've noticed several new contributors to C.O.C.A. TIMES over the last few issues and want to thank all of you for sending in articles for publication. The continued success of our magazine depends on our members being willing to take the time to photograph, research, write, and submit articles to be shared with fellow members. If you have an idea for an article, whether it's newly discovered information about a machine, historical information about a particular manufacturer or type of machine you collect, or a restoration project you've just completed, I'm sure our members would love to read about it. Please forward your articles to Paul Hindin at BedVibr8or@aol.com.

New classified ads on our website, [www.coinopclub.org](http://www.coinopclub.org), are still being posted almost every day, so remember to check it often. Non-members are permitted to post free ads also, so there is always that chance that a rare machine might be offered for sale by a non-collector that happened to find our site on a search engine. The CLASSIFIED ADS section of our site is also a great resource for posting wanted ads for machines, parts, manuals, flyers, and other information...and it's FREE.

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, April 4, 2013, at The Hilton Garden Inn, St. Charles, IL. For dinner reservations, contact Cindy Champer at [CindyChamper@aol.com](mailto:CindyChamper@aol.com) or by phone at 419-350-0477. Please make reservations for dinner by March 27th so that we can get an accurate count to the hotel.

See you in Chicago!

Doug Cain  
COCA President  
330.837.2265  
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## **DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: August 9, 2013**

# THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE

by John Peterson



Photo A



Photo B

It is said love makes fools of us all. Normally such assessment is made at the end of a relationship, not the beginning. Hindsight is always so much clearer than forethought. Experience is not necessarily the saving grace, either. Otherwise, there would be no such thing as remarriage after divorce. But what a sadder place the world would be without love and the foolish things we do for it. Today's tale is one such story.

**Photo A** is my latest acquisition. It appeared on Ebay as a truncated five-day auction. The seller had done his homework. The piece was correctly described as a "super rare vintage Bussoz – Paris France 'Exclusive Au-

tomatics,' a construecteur coin operated arcade game." The "super rare" part of the description was a bit of a stretch but the attribution was correct. This is a Pierre Bussoz roulette game originally named "La Girouette" from the early 20th Century. The three spinning panels were originally painted with barnyard figures (For more information on these games, see my earlier article "Twisted Sisters." COCA Times Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2008.) A number of these games were exported to England where they were revamped to accept the large British penny. The graphics were also changed from animals to pin-ups. The name given this "new"

machine was “Exclusive Automatics.” The machine being offered for sale was one of these British revamps. I know the game fairly well for I own one that I purchased from a nice lad in England years ago, *Photo B*.

The auction started at the nominal offering of \$9.99. I was interested, of course. The ad stated that the door was locked with no key. There was no way to ascertain the completeness of the mechanism although the seller did include the ever helpful opinion that “this one is in fantastic physical condition and appears to be complete with the entire mechanism inside (from what I can tell without removing the back.)” He also stated “I have not tried it since the photo plates are not present nor do I have the correct coins as I don’t know what they would have been and didn’t want to jam it.”

Looking at the game with what I like to think is a more experienced eye, I could see that certain pieces of the hardware were garden variety replacements, including the actual garden spigot handle parading as a turn knob. This does not inspire confidence. Hoping to learn more, I emailed the seller and asked for background concerning the previous owner. Might I have his telephone number so I could hear first-hand what other improvements he had made? The seller informed me that the previous owner, an elderly gentleman, had recently died. His grandson was the one who presented the game to the seller, saying, “Granddad got the machine running just fine.”

To recap, I’m looking at a quite rare French game that is locked, of unknown completeness, with monkey parts put on by a now dead man who also glued a particle board backing to an historic game of 100 years of age. Why are I hearing alarm bells? To make things even more interesting, over the short course of our discussions, the seller, out of the blue, informs me that the auction is going so poorly that he intends to stop the auction and sell the game to a local party who has offered \$650 and will pick up the game in person, relieving the seller of any packing obligation. Finally, he informs me that if I’m interested in the machine, it might be mine but only if I “show him the love.”

Love. In my dictionary, a synonym for “love” is “trouble.” The only real question running through my mind at this point is: how much trouble? There

is the trouble of physically picking up the machine, an eighteen hour round trip from my house. There is the trouble of getting into the locked cabinet. Then there is the biggest potential trouble of all...what exactly is the completeness of this game? There are cardboard cards covering the painted panels. It’s a safe bet the pictures on the panels will have to be reconstructed. But what else? It is, to my mind, a pig in a poke. Should I bite?

You already know the answer. I bought the poke for \$750. A major factor in my decision was the 1,283 miles drive. Rather than being a minus, the drive was a plus. This is because my dear brother lives directly on my route to the seller, three hours short of destination. In addition to a welcome visit, my brother has been holding a family heirloom for me, a handgun formerly owned by our father. Handguns may not legally be mailed to private citizens in the United States. I had been looking for an excuse to personally retrieve this prize from my brother for some time. This was the excuse I had been seeking.

Family heirloom and French roulette are now back home with me. Was my love misplaced? The jury is still out. In spite of assurances to the contrary, Granddad did not get the roulette game operating, not if what I purchased is what he had at time of his death. The cardboard panels rub against the viewing window preventing them from rotating. There are also components critical to the operation of the game that are missing. Thankfully the missing parts are more minor than major in terms of reproduction. Having said that, were it not for the working example that I already own, I’m not sure I could get this current mechanism functioning properly.

Love. It changes the chemistry in our brain and makes us do crazy things. Knowing now what I do about my most recent love, do I regret my decision? Absolutely not. I now own two of these fascinating games, one of which works and one with future promise. You can finish the sentence for me: “It is better to have loved and lost than...”

I think you will agree.

The End

**LOVE TO TALK ABOUT ENGLISH COIN-OP?  
WRITE ME AT: [jp4@CHARTER.NET](mailto:jp4@CHARTER.NET).**

# Gum Vender - OR - Draw Poker?



I acquired this Royal Gum Vender, made by the National Coin Machine Exchange, of Toledo, Ohio, on eBay, in June. It was listed under Antique Slot Machines not Trade Stimulators. I was bidding against Bill Whelan of Slot Dynasty.

After winning the bid, I contacted Bill about acquiring an award card and original-type reel strips that match the ones that were old and faded that was on the machine when I received it. He advised me that since there were very few of these machines produced, both the National Draw Poker and Royal Gum Vender machines, he did not have any reel strips to offer that would match. Bill then told me that he too bid on this same machine and that he would look through his archives for more information. He asked me what the serial number was. I advised him that it had serial number 502. He told me that the first number was a series number and that I most likely had serial number 2. In 1934, National came out with their Draw Poker machine. Mr. Whelan and I both share in the belief that when National added the gum vender to their Draw Poker machine in 1935, that they came up with the name Royal Gum Vender, but was probably threatened to be sued by A.B.T. Mfg., and others, because A.B.T. had a machine that came out in 1934 called Royal Reels, and others that followed the Draw Poker theme had machines called Royal Flush. So in order to avoid a law suit, National reverted



back to the name Draw Poker that was in the front casting that they had used in 1934. The Draw Poker and Royal Gum Vender have the same principle functions of the 1904 Callie Brothers and Mills machines named Hy-Lo. The mechanism used in these earlier cast iron card machines, especially the Callie machine, is almost identical to the mechanism used in the more modern art deco case design by National. Pictures of these earlier machines can be found in Tom Gustwiller's book "For Amusement Only", on page 61, and Richard Bueschel's book "Guide to Vintage Trade Stimulators and Counter Games", on page 74.

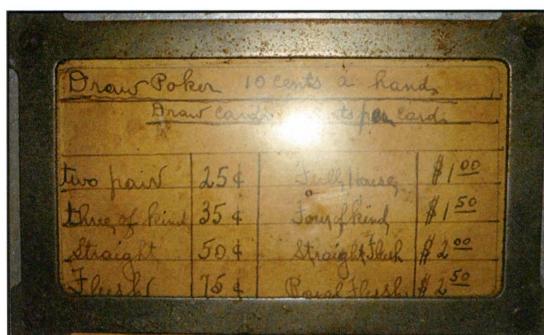
I contacted the people I acquired this machine from in hopes of obtaining more background on how they came about owning it, and they told me that it belonged to their great-grandfather who had the machine set up in the back room of his butcher shop in Perrysburg, Ohio, which is only a few miles from the National factory in Toledo, and it had been in their family since the 1930s. It was in rough condition when I received it. It had a piece broken off the top marquee and had broken screws that held the mechanism in place, and the key for the back door was bent in half. In other words, it was in dire need of restoration. At some point and time, the butcher changed the original award card to read "ten cent play" instead of "one cent play"; these machines will accept and play on both denominations.

As for the very beginnings of this machine, and the Draw Poker machine, there is a good write-up on the history of Charlie Jameson and his new founded company, National Coin Machine Exchange, that is found in Richard Bueschel's "Guide to the 100 Most Collectible Trade Stimulators", on page 80. Charlie first started out back during the Yukon gold rush as a grifter. He became a "lieutenant" in Detroit's notorious Purple Gang and a leader of the local slot machine operator's association. At one time Charlie was running slots in over a dozen states. When he started to make big money, he formed his company in Toledo, Ohio to try and escape the shadows of the mob in order to produce machines of his own. But one day in 1936, some of his "Purple Gang" buddies from Detroit walked into his shop in Toledo and said he had a real good thing going and they wanted to be part of it. That night, Charlie closed the factory doors, and never went back to Toledo, so the machines that he produced between 1934 and 1936 were very limited in their production.

In the process of restoring this machine, I did research to find out what color or colors these machines were produced in. What I found out was that they were done in silver with blue trim and light yellow or beige with red trim. I choose to go with the light yellow with red trim. The art deco designs are highlighted with dark red, bright yellow and bright orange. The blocks around the numbers 1 through 5 over the window and on marquee are in black and red. The original reel strips were in too bad of condition to reuse, so a sign specialist in Dallas was contracted to recreate a totally new 1930's art-deco-look deck of cards printed on mother-of-pearl colored paper in order to give it the slightly faded look, but still go with the new restoration.

These machines, both the Draw Poker and Royal Gum Vender, work so smoothly, it's a shame that these are so rare, especially the Royal Gum Vender; only a few examples exist. I feel very fortunate that I was able to acquire this rare example because I had been looking for years for a National Draw Poker but found instead its predecessor. This machine is a great piece of Americana along with its origin. If you have any information regarding the Royal Gum Vender including articles, pictures, serial numbers, etc., please email me at dappledman@yahoo.com.

*For comparison, see the Draw Poker*



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# SEVENTEEN COLLECTIONS IN FOUR DAYS

*By Johnny Duckworth*

This adventure originally started out with Don Mangels talking with Les Aaron at the C.O.C.A convention in Minneapolis about visiting a few collectors in California. It was only small talk but within a short period of time this trip quickly grew into eight collectors visiting seventeen collections in the Los Angeles area. The collectors which all came from different states, included Chad Boekelheide, Tom Gustwiller, Charles Kemp, Don Mangels, David McDonald, Ron Pulver, Larry Vedas, and myself. We flew out on a Sunday morning and by 11:30am we were in the Hertz rental van and on our way to see our first collection. We had left the freezing cold weather behind in hopes for a warm and sunny California; only to find the cold weather had beat us there.

Les was kind enough to select and arrange the schedule with every collector we would be visiting and the time

we would meet with them to view their collection. Don coordinated with Les the hotel arrangements and information before we left so everyone knew what to expect. We would see every kind of coin operated machine you can imagine on this trip; so no matter what you were into you would find it along the way. The collectors we were able to visit include Les Aaron, Eugene Brown, Phil Cunningham, Dan Davids, Scott Fawcett, Barry Goldfarb, Larry Griffin, John Hermann, Roger Kislingbury, Sandy Lechtick, Mike Lustig, Greg McLemore, Fred Roth, George Stupar, Bill Thomas, Ira Warren, & John Zuk.

We drove over 600 miles throughout southern California and saw well over 5,000 machines so I will try to make this short and sweet. Our first stop on Sunday was at Dan's, who has an incredible collection of penny slot machines, all types of vending machines (particu-

larly Northwestern which is where his nickname comes from, Mr. Northwestern), and an arcade you could spend hours in. Dan was kind enough to have pizza waiting on us so we really got off to a great start that day. We drove over to Eugene's next who has a wonderful collection of vending machines spread all over his house. From there we went to Bill's home only to find one of the best views overlooking Long Beach. He had a large room filled with plenty of early gambling machines and trade stimulators. After enjoying the 270 degree panoramic view in the kitchen with 14 windows we were off to Larry's to find a house stuffed with slot machines. He had quite a few character slots along with all the other types of gambling machines. We ended up at Scott's that night only to find a mother lode of console slots and dollar machines lined up with everything else you can imagine; his collection was displayed very well.

Monday we headed out early to Barry's house which holds the largest collection of gambling and trade stimulators to be found. You can't imagine that so many different machines would exist, but he seemed to have them all. We left Barry's and followed him into the hills to one of his wineries to have lunch, tour the winery, and then sample some of the wine. Then it was off to Mike's house where we found a nest of bees along with many other incredible cast iron gambling machines and porcelain signs. From there we went to Fred's home to see a variety of machines such as coin operated nickelodeons, orchestrations, gambling machines, and jukeboxes. To top that off, he had a car museum inside his home that held eight restored sports cars. We finished the night off at Phil's house and work shop, where I have never seen so many vending machines and parts in my life.

On Tuesday morning we headed out to Les's and what a site to see. He had a beautiful backyard with an amazing view let alone the incredible house and collection. A pristine candy machine greeted you when you walked in the door and at a nickel a pull it was quite popular. He has quite a collection of coin operated machines such as trade stimulators, arcade, vending, and everything else you can imagine. From there we headed over to Ira's where a seven foot tall 1,200 lbs. Jack Johnson the boxer guards his wonderful collection of about anything early you can imagine. Then it was off to Sandy's, whose home was once owned by one of the Golden Girls, Rue McClanahan. We expected to find a magnificent arcade, and when we arrived, it exceeded

all expectations. You would never imagine entering a room in someone's home only to find yourself in another place in time. You could spend days in his arcade since it seemed to go on forever and you felt like a little kid at a carnival with all the lights, music, and action; it was an incredible sight to see. We capped the night off eating dinner at Buca Di Beppo's at a large round table of 14 collectors engaging in the same conversation, making it a wonderful night.

Wednesday we started out at John H's house which was built on a very steep hill that gave a breathtaking view down the valley. His collection of early machines was excellent as well. From there we headed over to George's who has a fantastic collection of rare early gambling machines and one of the best collections of original Rolatops I have seen. We followed John Z. back to his home which was built in 1906 for AP Seymour of the Pass and Seymour fame. It's an incredible home in which John renovated to now showcase his wonderful collection of coin-op. After John's, we stopped in to visit an old antique car shop with every old fashioned car you can imagine. Upon leaving the car shop, we headed off to Greg's home to view some great arcade and gambling machines. Greg also has a wealth of old paper literature on most of the machines we collect today. Then lastly we went into our time machine which landed us at the Antlers Saloon in Pasadena. Roger put on a great time with plenty of food in his incredible old saloon, which Waldo would say, "it's old fashion".

We all collect and enjoy certain coin operated machines and it's always fun to visit a collector and see how they enjoy and display their collection. If you've never been to the yearly C.O.C.A. convention you are missing out. I have only been able to attend a couple, but every single one has been over the top. I would recommend you try this since you can't even begin to imagine the great experience and wonderful people you meet. This trip to California felt like a small private convention and it was perfect because the group was small enough to get around easy and view the collections. I had several collectors comment on how easy it was to have a small tour like this in their home. One thing we did learn from this trip was to plan your day around the 405 interstate, which Les did a great job doing considering how big and busy it is. I want to thank the collectors in California who took time out of their schedule to make this trip happen; we had a great time and will always remember it.



If you would like to see more photos from this trip, please check out the C.O.C.A. website at [coinopclub.org](http://coinopclub.org).

## "TALES OF THE HUNT"

# 3 SLOT MACHINES - 3 RESTAURANTS

by Salvatore Mazzeo

I received the phone call one Saturday afternoon earlier this year. A man identified himself as Jerry, and said he was the friend of a friend. I rolled my eyes, thinking that another insurance salesman was pitching his wares. Then he told me he had three slot machines for sale, and identified himself as a friend of my friend Jeff, who lives near me, here in Cincinnati. That immediately got my attention. So I asked him for some details on the machines. He described them as post war Mills machines that sounded like a 5 cent Hightop, and a pair of Golden Falls nickel and quarter machines. They were unrestored, but complete. "So how much do you want for them?" I asked. He said he wanted \$1300. "Each?" I asked, getting ready to end the phone call. "No, for all three", he said. That increased my interest level by 100% in seconds. "OK, when can I see them"? We agreed that he would be at the monthly antique fair in northern Kentucky in a week, so we agreed to meet the day before the fair. "What's a good location to get together?", I asked. "How about the Frisch's restaurant near the fair, in the Florence, Kentucky area?" was his response. Frisch's is a chain restaurant/diner featuring the 'Big Boy' hamburger sandwich for those familiar with that meal. I knew there were at least a couple of those restaurants in that area, so I asked for an address. But he didn't know the address, so after agreeing on a time to meet, I did some Mapquest research. There were 2 Frisch's in the city of Florence. So I printed out two Mapquest directions, in case my first choice wasn't correct.

So on a rainy Saturday, my friend Jeff Lawton and I set off for what should've been a short (1/2 hour) trip from Cincinnati to northern Kentucky. But just as the rain clouds above were threatening, so were my plans for success. We had set an agreed-upon time to meet at the restaurant, and after fighting through construction traffic and the weather, arrived there a bit late. We didn't see our contact's truck, so called him on his cell phone. He said he was at the restaurant, but after check-

ing around the building, there was no sign of him. Obviously, we concluded we were at the wrong restaurant. So then we were off to Frisch's restaurant number two.

Fifteen minutes later, we found the second Frisch's but once again, there was no truck with the slots I was seeking. Again I called the contact, who said he was at the restaurant. After circling the building, we still couldn't find him. Wouldn't you know it, I thought to myself, there must be another Frisch's in this area. So I called him on his cell phone, and determined the approximate location of this third restaurant. Off we went again on our trek. After another 15 minutes or so, we found the correct restaurant, as well as our slot machine contact. Success at last! (The restaurant was actually in the town next to Florence, Kentucky). After pleasantries, we opened the back of his truck to examine his treasures (or what would become treasures after restoration).

There were two Mills Golden Falls slot machines, one a 5 cent, and the other a 25 cent. There was also a 5 cent Mills Hightop. The machines were very dirty, but appeared to be complete. They were all missing back doors, one of the Golden Falls was missing a back bonnet, and one machine was missing a cash box. But for the most part, they just needed a thorough disassembly and cleaning.

Over the next six months, as I found time outside of my day job, I restored the machines, running into the usual variety of problems. But I resolved these problems as they arose, as I've restored slots for many years. I also ordered the missing parts to make the machines complete. Actually, I hadn't completely restored a Mills machine in several years, so these repairs resharpended my skills. That's because I bought and restored most of my slot collection in the 1980's and 1990's, so I've had fewer chances to restore machines lately. As a result, I take every opportunity to do repair work, or as in this case, buy, restore and sell machines.

One strange necessary repair on the Hightop involved

the 3rd reel strip. Certain payouts weren't occurring on that machine. At first, I thought I hadn't aligned the reel disks properly, or had reassembled the machine incorrectly. But when I checked the reel disks, I discovered that the 3rd reel strip wasn't original. Two of the orange symbols didn't correspond to holes on the reel disks (they were actually equivalent to a bell and lemon symbol). Also, one of the 7-7-7 overlay symbols was missing, which was necessary for the \$10 token payout. To fix this, I made color copies of the reel strips and pasted on the correct symbols, so the payouts would be correct. I don't know what happened to the original reel strip, or why this rogue strip was placed on the Hightop. But of course, you never know what you'll find with a restoration.

Attached are the photos of the finished machines – I left the original paint on them, as they were all in nice shape, and I didn't want to over-restore them. I then put them up for auction locally here in Cincinnati, as my basement gameroom was already full, and they weren't rare machines to add to my collection. Also, if I continue to bring games home, tension with my wife will cause me to sleep with one eye open. But I thought they would make great games for someone else to enjoy in their home.

I did sell them at a local Cincinnati auction house about a month ago. I wanted to attend the auction

personally, but the auctioneer strongly recommended against that. She told me that sellers often say too much during the auction, and mess up the final sale. As a result, my friend Jeff Lawton attended in my place, and I listened into the live auction via his cell phone. At first, there were few bidders and I worried that I wouldn't be able to sell the machines at the minimum prices I'd given the auctioneer. The auctioneer first sold the 25 cent Golden Falls slot for a price below its value, although still above my minimum number, and that made me worry about the other two machines. But the prices then picked up, and all three machines sold successfully. That seems to happen often with multiple slot sales at an auction. The first machine doesn't bring the best price, but then other bidders want to get into the action before all of the machines are gone. So in total, they brought a good price. Based on prices I've seen lately at Chicagoland, I think I did better here locally. One local antique dealer ended up buying all three machines.

So if someone tells you think that there aren't any more unrestored slot machines out there, don't believe them! They aren't as common as in years past, but they can be found. You just have to talk about slot machines with friends and acquaintances, getting your name out there as a resource for repairs, or as a buyer and seller of machines. Even if you end up having to go to three different restaurants to buy your machines!

## Mills Golden Falls



## Mills Hightop



# —Jennings Modern Vendor—

by Rick Akers

I want to tell you about my latest find. Trouble is; there wasn't anything particularly interesting about how I found my machine. It wasn't found in an old barn or behind a false wall in an old store. I found it on eBay. I guess the only things I can think of that were somewhat interesting about my find is that, as interesting as this machine is, it lasted a whole week on eBay with no one bidding on it. The second thing is, I was able to buy this machine even though I live in one of those poor unfortunate states that aren't supposed to even bid on slot machines (Tennessee). We need to get these states legal!



A while back, I saw a listing on eBay for a 1940 5¢ Jennings Modern Vendor. The starting bid amount seemed pretty good, and the few pictures that were there looked interesting. I added it to my Watch List and started a Google search to find out more about a Jennings Modern Vendor. Thing is, there was next to nothing on the Internet about this machine. I found pictures of four other Modern Vendors that had gone through "real" auctions and that was about it. Nothing! You can find the answer to the "Meaning of Life" on the Internet and yet, there was nothing about this machine. Ok, I'll just look through my extensive collection of coin-op books to see what someone wrote about this machine. Still, nothing! I later realized my collection of books is not as extensive as I thought. My third option was to start bugging other collectors by sending emails asking about this elusive machine. Two of the emails I sent were to Jeff Frahm at Two-Bit Restorations and Tom Kolbrener at St Louis Slot Machine Co. Jeff and Tom were quick to respond. Jeff wrote back:

*"Wow, that's a rare old bird. You are correct; it's an early 1940s model that Jennings played around with. It never went into a large production run. It is NOT foreign. The correct name is "Jennings Modern Vendor" but was also known as "Free Play Mint Vendor". This is a quote from an Introductory Ad by Jennings in the June 8, 1940 Billboard Magazine, "Here's the news that you've waited for- Now the Bell Machine has been approved by the Superior Court of one of our largest states - It's the Jennings Modern Vender. The machine has no payout*

*- awards are made in free plays - and one roll of Mints vended with each coin played." A picture of it in the ad appears on page 397 and 402 of Dick Bueschell's two-volume set of books, JENNINGS SLOT MACHINES 1906-1990. It only came out as a nickel machine and was discontinued due to poor sales and World War II. This is a wonderful historical piece and highly collectable. I'd grab it if I were you."*

I also found a couple places in "The Coin Slot" magazine where this machine was mentioned. Dick Bueschel wrote, in part, in the Winter 1988/89 issue:

*"....Thanks for the picture of your Jennings Modern Vendor. This interesting gadget, while touted as a trade stimulator, is actually a slot machine, except it doesn't have the payout slides. But they got around that. Introduced in June 1940 as the Free Play Mint Vendor Chief - so it's a Chief machine - it tallied "free plays" on the clock dial at the top. So when a player is ready to quit, the location paid off in nickels times free games, or offered it in trade. It was a way to get around the payout slot machine laws. They also called it the MODERN VENDOR to hide the gambling aspects....."*

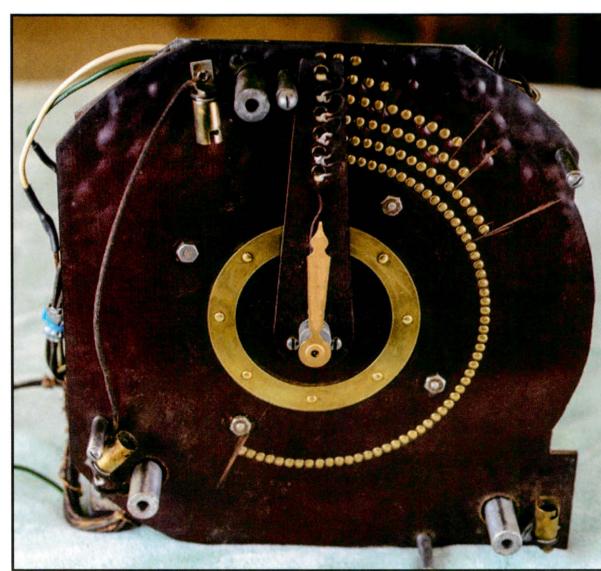
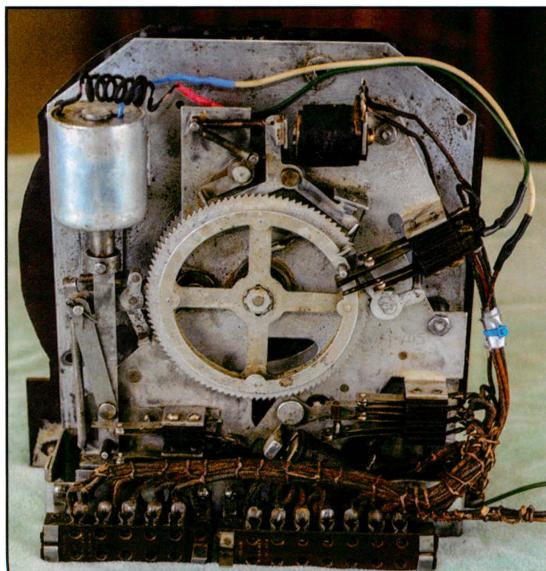
Bob Stone wrote, in part, in the Winter 1993/94 issue:

*"....This is the second one that I recall seeing in about 25 years....."*

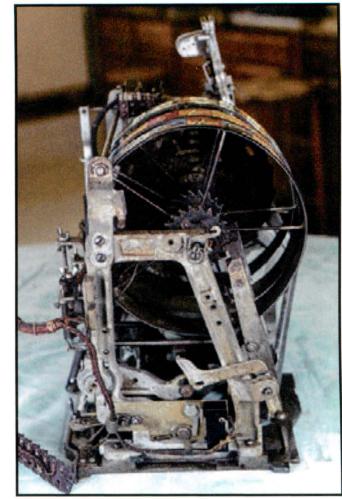
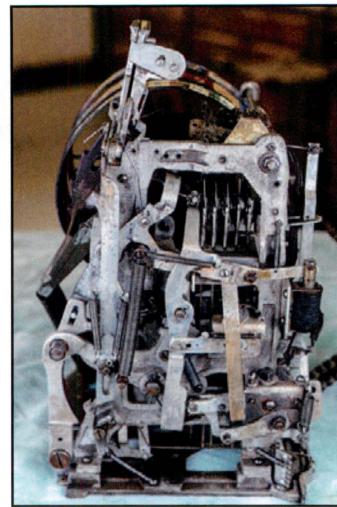
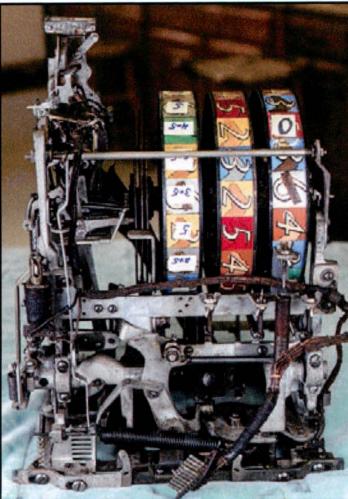
Now I'm really interested. How can I buy this machine? I can't bid on it. Then I realized there was only a day left on the auction and no one had bid on it yet. I waited. To my surprise, the week ended and no one bid on the thing. I quickly sent an email to the owner asking if the machine was still available and would he be interested in dealing with a law breaking collector from Tennessee. We quickly agreed on a price and I sent him the money. This is what I received from the big brown truck about a week later.

The Modern Vendor is an electro-mechanical machine, a first for me. It seemed to be all there, except the award card. Thanks to Bob Stones' photos he included in The Coin Slot issue mentioned above, I was able to reproduce the award card. As you can see, it has the original back door, with key. It even has the original cash box, with key. I also got the key to the mint vendor on the front and there were about 12 rolls of mints with reproduction Jennings wrappers. Someone's been working on this machine. On closer inspection, I noticed the power cord was replaced and I don't think all that gold paint belongs there. I'll take care of cosmetics after I get it working.

This is where my dilemma starts and the main reason for writing this article. I've never worked on anything electro-mechanical before and I know very little about how this machine should work.



After a very careful inspection, I found several small things that needed fixing. The flat spring that returns the credit dial on the stepper unit, above the mechanism, was broke. A few wires were loose or badly frayed.



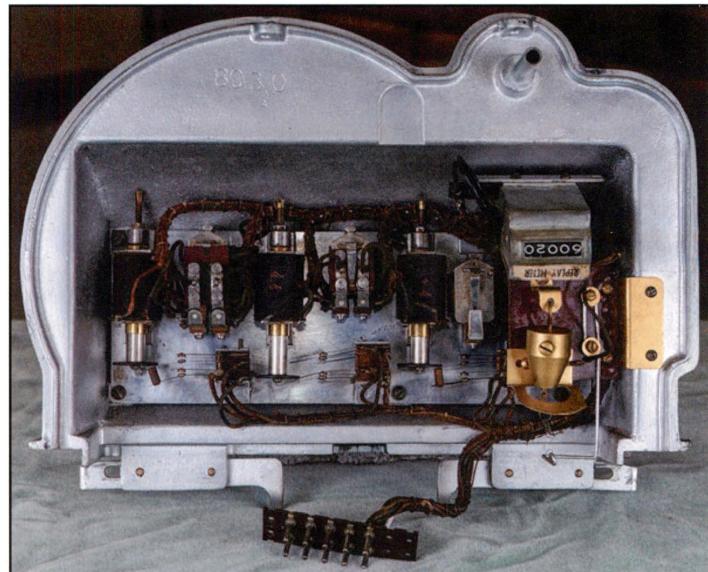
The mechanism works fine and needed no adjustments. However, based on the holes in the payout disc, I think the strips are incorrect. I'm finding a lot of the symbols aren't matching the payout holes on the corresponding disc. The strips seem to have a horse race theme with numbers 1 through 6 and all of the 6's have "Disqualified" or "Scratched" written over the 6. Based on that information and the payout disc, I'm assuming the payouts are 1 through 5. As stated above, the payouts are in credits that show up on a large dial at the top of the machine. Once you earn credits, the mechanism will not accept any coins until all credits are used up. The mechanism has none of the coin payout parts in the lower half of the mechanism.

The back bonnet has several solenoids and relays plus a tilt mechanism and small mechanical counter attached. Sticking through the back bonnet is a reset button. All of the electrical "stuff" on the mechanism and the back bonnet plug into a stepper unit that sits above the mechanism. This stepper unit keeps track of winning combinations on the reels and shows the credits on the front.

I've got something that needs adjusting on either the stepper unit or in the back bonnet electrical "stuff". When I land on a win, the stepper goes into a continuous credit giving mode. Somehow, it's not getting the information needed to know how many credits to give. I am playing around with the machine, trying to figure things out. I think I've identified about half of what the electrical components and switches do.

So, my question, my plea, to all collectors that read this. If anyone knows anything about this machine or how the components should work together, I would love to talk to you.

I sure would like to talk to those four other collectors that bought those Modern Vendors I saw on the Internet. If you're trying to get your machine working, then together, we can figure this very interesting piece of history out.



My contact information is in the COCA member's information on their web site and right here.  
Rick Akers - [Rick.akers1@gmail.com](mailto:Rick.akers1@gmail.com) - Cell 405 471-2517.



## *In Memory of Jim Collings*

On December 30, 2012, one of C.O.C.A.'s members, Jim Collings, passed away. Jim was 77 and lived life to the fullest. Even though Jim was legally blind, he was still considered an expert in the fields of jukeboxes, scales, celebrity and cartoon character dolls, character clocks and watches and even autographs worldwide. With the aid of his wife, Merlyn, they were the "go to" people on famous autographs and novelty watches. Jim and Merlyn also authored a book , Character and Novelty clocks and watches, Identification and Values.

Prior to moving to Brevard, NC, Jim ran a store that sold game room coin operated machines and novelties and a magic shop in North Miami, FL. One of his favorite stories was the day Muhammad Ali walked into his store to buy some magic tricks (see photo). And yes, Jim was a magician too.

Jim was also a regular contributor of articles to the C.O.C.A. magazine, sharing some incredible stories on scale collecting. Jim will be greatly missed.

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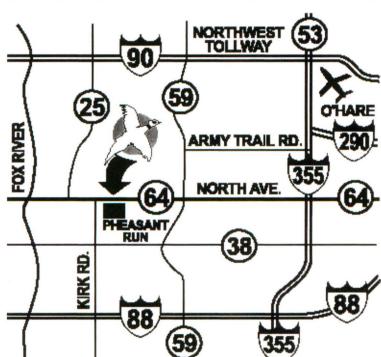
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For Our Spring 2013 Advertising, Toy & Doll Auction

Julia's recent toy, doll & advertising auction was a tremendous success, showing strong prices in nearly every category. The auction boasted a stellar offering that ranged from early American tin to clockwork automotive toys, fine French & German dolls, antique advertising, salesman samples, and much more. Despite changes to the market in recent years, fresh to the market, quality items that are conservatively estimated are still performing admirably. For over 40 years, Julia's has been at the forefront of the auction world, regularly handling quality estates and collections with aplomb. Our sterling reputation for honest and fair dealing, elegant presentation and the finest catalogs in the industry, combined with proven results including a great number of world auction records, and the most competitive commission rates in the industry means the greatest net return to you the consignor. We are now accepting quality consignment for our spring Toy & Doll auction. Whether you have one item or an entire collection, please contact us today for a free, no-obligation consultation. Be sure to ask about our special 0% seller's commission for expensive items.



Rock-Ola 1937 World Series  
Baseball game (est. \$35-40,000)  
**SOLD \$42,550**



Caille Double slot w/ music  
(est. \$45-65,000)  
**SOLD \$80,500**



Multiphone coin-  
operated cylinder  
phonograph  
**SOLD \$63,250**



Encore coin-op  
automated banjo  
(est. \$50-75,000)  
**SOLD \$54,625**



Regina upright auto disc  
changer (est. \$23-25,000)  
**SOLD \$25,875**



Regina coin-op music box w/  
gum vendor (est. \$9-11,000)  
**SOLD \$9,775**



Sweepstakes horse race  
game (est. \$1,800-2,200)  
**SOLD \$4,600**



Mills Brownie slot  
(est. \$7-9,000)  
**SOLD \$9,775**



Sun Mfg. Co. Bicycle trade  
stimulator (est. \$5,500-6,500)  
**SOLD \$9,200**



Mills perfume machine  
(est. \$5-8,000)  
**SOLD \$9,200**



Regina Hexaphone  
coin-op  
phonograph  
**SOLD \$8,850**



Champion  
gum vendor  
**SOLD \$4,600**



Mills shock  
machine  
(est. \$16-18,000)  
**SOLD \$17,250**



Yellow Kid  
gum vendor  
(est. \$5-10,000)  
**SOLD \$12,075**



Lukat gambling machine  
(est. \$15-20,000)  
**SOLD \$22,425**



Bally Reliance dice game  
(est. \$12-15,000)  
**SOLD \$16,100**

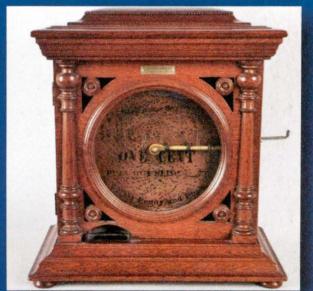


Mills Baseball  
slot machine  
(est. \$5,500-7,500)  
**SOLD \$9,200**

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Seller's commission  
on expensive items

# The Regina vendor: More than a song



Roger Smith

## When a song just wasn't enough

Whether the impulse for music was satisfied by a music box, a wax cylinder player, a jukebox or a modern digital play list, music as a sellable commodity has been around for a very long time. There are times when just a song just wasn't enough, or so entrepreneurs have thought: Enter the combined music machine and gum vendor. One of the most ornate of these hybrids is the Regina gum vendor, and the story of it, and its parent company, leads us from shifting musical technologies, the roots of jukeboxes, and early multinational corporations, all the way to modern vacuum cleaners...

### Music from a box

The idea of a self playing music box evolved from the carillon bell towers used in Europe where a rotating barrel, pinned with cogs in certain positions, would move hammers to strike tuned bells at the proper time to produce music. Generally made by watchmakers and each one unique, music boxes and musical watches were well known in Europe and America, gaining popularity in the eighteenth-century with the French court of Louis XIV. The nineteenth-century saw the invention of the mass produced cylinder music box. Building upon a strong

watchmaking tradition, the first music box factory was opened in Switzerland in 1815, by Jérémie Recordon and Samuel Junod.

These commercial music boxes consisted of a brass cylinder studded with steel pins that plucked a tuned steel music comb as the cylinder rotated, turned by a clockwork motor. Cylinders were made in lengths from two to 24 inches, and up to five inches in diameter. The cylinder music box industry grew to employ over 100,000 workers in Europe and America.

While musically exquisite, cylinder music boxes had the major drawback of only being able to perform the tunes that had been "pinned" to the cylinder when they were made, limiting their repertoire.

(Some larger boxes had up to a dozen songs pinned side-by-side on the cylinder, allowing variety by shifting the position of the cylinder, and some had replaceable cylinders, but the options were limited.) The limited playlist would soon become tiresome, whereby, these boxes would be quickly retired.

The introduction, in Germany, in 1870, of music boxes based on interchangeable discs solved this problem. Ironically, the very first boxes at the end of the eighteenth-century made use of metal disks. (The switch to cylinders became complete after the Napoleonic wars.) The first maker of disc music boxes to go into mass production was Symphonion of Leipzig, Germany, regarded by many to be greatest music boxes ever known. In 1889, Gustave Brachhausen, the foreman of Symphonion, created the Polyphon Musikwerke in partnership with a Symphonion engineer Paul Riessner. Besides Polyphon, the industry quickly grew to include Kalliope, Adler, Fortuna, Sireon, Libellion, Stella, Mira, Lochmann, New Century, Britannia, and others with production based in Germany and Switzerland.

### Opportunities for growth

In 1892, Polyphon recognizing the huge market potential that was America (and the opportunity to avoid import tariffs), elected to open a branch in America. After sailing to America in September



1882 patent  
by Piguet

1892, Brachhausen leased some space in Jersey City, and with financing from Knauth, Nachod &

Kuhne in Leipzig, he set up shop in partnership with Riessner and Johannes J. Korner, establishing the Regina Music Box Company, in Rahway, NJ. Regina was soon joined by competitors Capitol cuff, Criterion, Olympia, Euphonia, Crown, Sterling, Imperial Symphonion, Mira, Empress, Perfection, Monarch, Triumph, and other makes of disc music boxes in America.

Gustave A. Brachhausen  
1892

Initially, Regina imported their boxes from Polyphon, selling 11 and 15.5-inch models, but soon only the movements were imported and assembled into American-made boxes. Success was so great that after only a year, Brachhausen bought a 35,000-square foot building at 54 Cherry Street in Rahway, to house the company's 200 employees. In a few years, Regina was

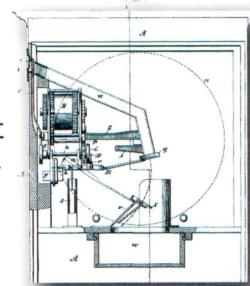
manufacturing their products entirely in America, as Brachhausen accumulated patents and introduced new models.

The industry grew rapidly in Europe and America because the disc music box allowed the owner to get new music anytime a new tune was arranged and produced by the music box maker. Riding this boom, the Regina company had sales of about \$2 million by the turn of the century and sold over 100,000 machines from 1892 to 1921.

### Pay for play

Around 1886, Percival Everett patented a penny-in-the-slot strength testing machine in England. When he arrived in America to seek financial backing, he was persuaded to add coin-operation to personal weighting scales. Music boxes were incorporated into some scales to give users something more than just their weight and to attract onlookers to part with their pennies as well. Soon after, coin-operated music boxes made their appearance, in part because

the cost of early music boxes made them too expensive for most individuals. As a result, a high percentage of early commercial music boxes (especially the larger ones) were coin-operated. In 1893, Barachhausen patented a device that made coin-operation supposedly fool proof by using an automatic slot-closing mechanism to prevent jamming while the box was playing. By 1895, he was marketing both penny and nickel operated Regina music boxes, supplying about 80% of the market.

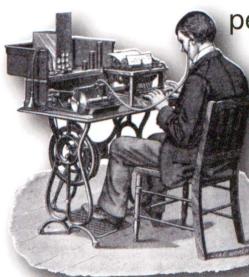


### Storm clouds for an industry

The boom in the disc music box industry lasted only until about 1907 or 1908. The factors that would cause this demise were set in motion by the 1877 invention of the wax cylinder player of Thomas Edison.

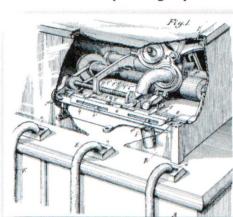


When Edison set out to commercialize his new invention, he saw it as a business device. In fact, in 1878 Edison suggested 10 possible uses for the machine, only one of which was the "reproduction of music." There had been a tumultuous beginning for the business, marked by a race to register patents, industrial espionage, and personal rivalries. Though most of the first 500 machines produced were used by showmen across the country to demonstrate its ability, the early machine did not catch on. By 1891, the number of companies leasing the dictating machines (they were never sold) had declined from 33 to only 19 and most of these were using the machines for entertainment and traveling shows.



The first coin model appears to have been by Louis Glass, patented in 1890. In November 1889, the Pacific Phonograph Company placed the first of these machines in the

Palais Royal Saloon in San Francisco. Listening using 'stethoscope' type earphones, up to four people could listen at a time, generating up to 20¢ a play. During its first six



months of operation, this machine reportedly took in over \$1,000 in nickels. Felix Gottschalk was impressed with Glass' success and,

 in 1890, used \$1 million in capital stock to form the Automatic Exhibition Company of New York to market nickel-operated machines across the country. Some 750 of the new machines

were placed across the country, taking in a reported \$2 a day in average sales. Despite Edison's continuing objections to the use of the cylinder players for entertainment and not business (he would not relent until 1894), demands for new music caused the young Columbia Phonograph Company to become the dominant record producer, then and for many years to come. (By 1893, Columbia was reportedly shipping up to 500 cylinders a day from their catalog.) By 1891, reports of machines grossing \$1,000 in only two months, made clear the direction that the cylinder player was moving. The popularity of phonographic parlors reached its peak in about 1897 with most cities in America and Europe having at least one. While there was money to be made with the coin-operated players, cylinder makers decided that the long-term growth of their industry depended upon producing an inexpensive but reliable product for home use, sealing the fate of the music box.

### An industry in trouble

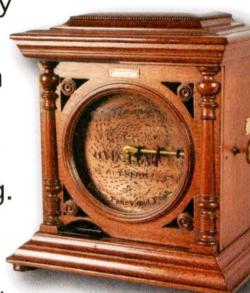
These inventions, the phonograph, player piano, nickelodeon, and orchestrion, had come into the market and quickly became the dominant instruments in the home entertainment and coin-operated musical entertainment industry. Sensing the threat, companies like Regina attempted to diversify by offering hybrid machines that included a wax cylinder

 or phonograph player besides the disc music box (from 1915 to 1920). Regina disc music boxes were also built into the floor model color wheel slot machines, such as the Musical UNO.

These Regina Slots were rare because most musical slot machines, such as those by the Caille Brothers, used cylinder music boxes. An especially attractive Regina gambling and vending machine was the Automatic Cashier and Discount Ma-

chine, made by the Yale Manufacturing Company of New Haven. This four-part machine came in different configurations including one that contained a vertical disc music box, a gum vendor, a rotating marquee that changed its advertisements each time a coin was inserted, and a gambling wheel in the middle.

Of interest to coin-operated vending collectors is the brief foray that Regina made in gum vending. Regina made a couple of different styles of music and gum vendor, the most ornate of which was the type 17a. This opulent machine featured a round window displaying the disc that was playing.



For the vending version, a product storage and dispensing mechanism was added and a delivery opening made in the lower left portion of the machine's face fretwork. While accurate records are lacking, it is estimated that only about 40 machines of this type were produced from 1900 to 1905.

The most common Regina gum vendor is the type 18. This machine has a simple square oak case with a more utilitarian look. In this machine, the dispensing is done on the same side as the coin entry and it uses a much less complex coin handling system than in the type 17a. It has been estimated that about 160 examples of this machine were made 1899 to just after the turn of the century.



### The fate of Regina

Like the rest of the industry, the Regina Music Box Company struggled and eventually closed in 1922. A portion of it did survive however in a sideline started in 1900; the vacuum cleaner. In the 1930s, Regina manufactured canister and upright styles of vacuum cleaners. Then, in the 1940s, they introduced a stick vacuum called an Electrik Broom. During World War II, they contributed to the war effort by making bomb fuses. After the war, Regina experienced dwindling profits and they were bought by an investment group. In 2000, the Royal Corporation acquired the rights to Regina, and now sells vacuums using the Home Depot brand name.

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# WEATHER GODS ARE KIND TO THE SLOT MACHINE ADVERTISING & JUKE BOX SHOW IN NOVEMBER

*By Jack Kelly*

"The weather gods are being kind to us this time," chortled one outdoor shopper at the semi-annual Chicagoland Antique Advertising and Slot Machine Show. The comment was made because at the spring event there was rain, wind and hail, then more rain during opening show hours.

On Friday, Nov. 10, hundreds of eager pre-dawn buyers swarmed into the parking lot sales area in St. Charles, Ill., armed with flashlights in brisk -- but dry -- weather. Many of them also forked over \$50 for early buying inside, as well as all day long. Less aggressive buyers paid a more modest \$7 admission on Saturday and Sunday.

"We always have a good time here," said 20-year show veteran Mark Bennett, who drove 9 hours from Roscoe, Pa., with a load of goodies including a 1930s Watling Rol-a-Top cherry front slot machine with gold award priced at \$8,500; an 1893 oak case Maley Investor trade stimulator for \$11,000 and a Mills Dial slot machine for \$5,800.

Another eastern dealer, John Herook of Lynnfield, Mass., had just begun setting up his booth early Friday morning when he sold an oddball two-foot-tall wheel of fortune with an 18-inch spinning wheel featuring raised metal images of animals for \$1,800. The purchase was made by a grandfather from Wisconsin who said, "I bought it for my grandkids."

It was the eighth time at Chicagoland for Jacob Cennet who flew 8 hours from Copenhagen "to see the show and find something interesting." He admired a 1910 floor model Mills Dewey slot machine with built-in music box priced at \$25,000 by dealer Frank Zygmunt Jr. of Westmont, Ill. Cennet said he had owned a Dewey, but "sold it a couple years ago." The 37 year old collector said "I started collecting slot machines when I was 12 years old, purchasing a Jennings Bingo Bell."

Another foot traffic stopper at Zygmunt's booth was an unusual oak 1910 Mills Double Violano coin-operated music machine. The dealer said he "had not seen another in 15 years." The rare machine carried a price tag of \$95,000.

Yet another high-ticket item was found at the booth of John Papa, Mayfield, N.Y. Drawing lots of attention was a floor model 1937 Rockola World Series coin-operated baseball machine with cast iron players on a ball field, offered for \$47,000. Papa called the machine "one of the few all-originals known," adding, "it was purchased from the owner who took it home from a penny arcade in Atlanta in the 1950s."

Folks looking for countertop, big budget coin-operated items could choose from several selections offered by two dealers just across the aisle from each other -- both of them from Wisconsin.

Jack Freund of Springfield showed off a cast iron 18-inch-tall Chicago Peanut Machine made in Morris, Ill., for \$7,395 and an early 1900s breath pellet vendor from the National Novelty Co., of Minneapolis with a decal on the machine stated, "Selling fragrant wholesome and lasting breath perfume." It could be purchased for \$4,295.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin dealer Paul Hindin showed off "the only one known" 1900s cast iron Advance Peanut Machine. He added the oddball original had "the tallest globe machine ever seen." Instructions to operate the device stated, "Drop a penny in, push lever forward and turn handle for a handful of peanuts." The 23-inch-tall vendor could dispense peanuts at your home for \$10,500.

"We've been showing at Chicagoland on and off forever" said Mick Ough, who set up with wife Marian to show antique advertising signs. Of special interest were two early Cracker Jack pieces including a 20-by 30-inch gold and silver leaf turn of century glass sign priced at \$2,500 and a 12 x 26-inch cardboard piece showing the famous Cracker Jack box which could be taken home for \$625.

A mix of vintage advertising signs along with juke boxes filled the booth of Bob and Richard Sandage, Louisville, Ky. Advertising collectors "oohed and ahhed" over two framed Coca-Cola signs. A 1916 tin sign with a maiden holding a glass of Coke was tagged \$5,500, while a 1950s cardboard example showing a lass with a bottle of Coke could be purchased for \$650. Music lovers checked over a restored 5 1/2-foot-tall flashy AMI "A" 40 selection 78 rpm jukebox priced at \$4,500.

Calling himself a "deciated hobbyist" Steve Cardon drove 20 hours from Salt Lake City, Utah, to show off early original and reproduction Wurlitzer jukebox items. Many shoppers admired his original 1939 countertop Model 61 that could be played at your home for \$3,800. The dealer also offered a selection of genuine and faux jukebox stands for the Model '61. Catching many an eye was the reproduction 32-inch-round light-up Wurlitzer model 4008 speaker priced at \$1,600.

"I love it" exclaimed dealer Otto Dorris of Tulsa, Okla., who was setting up at Chicagoland for the third time.

Gumball collectors stopped to admire his 1930s Sweepstakes horse race gum vending counter top cast metal penny machine priced at \$2,950. Advertising collectors stopped to check out his 1937 reverse on glass 16-by 24-inch Art Deco style Dr. Pepper Soda Pop clock that could keep time for you for \$3,800.

"It was found in a barn in Alabama and is one of two known" said dealer Mike Hasanou of nearby Barrington, Ill., pointing to a 1950s Chicago Coin Twin Bowler. The restored 14-foot-long machine was priced at \$25,000. At the same spot an unrestored original Bally Race Track console style coin-op machine with nine full dimension miniature cast race horses could be played for \$12,000. Hasanou pointed out the ribbon mahogany zebra accent wood construction on the nickel operated device.

You could ride home from Chicagoland in style with the restored 1963 Cushman Eagle motor scooter offered by Leo Zawilla of Hoffman Estates, Ill. The two-speed 50cc scooter featured factory matched re-paint, saddle bags, electric start, 6,300 miles on the odometer – and a price tag of \$5,600.

As in the past, the show has gained a reputation as being "family friendly."

Father and son team, David Cogan and Max, age 8, flew to the show from Scottsdale, Ariz., as Dad said, "just to see the show." The pair were checking out arcade claw machines and made a first purchase of a coin-operated mantel clock. It's a "fun daddy-son trip" smiled Cogan, while Max chimed in, "It's pretty cool."

Still another dad and lad were Ryan Russell and son Denver, age 5, of Wauconda, Ill., who were both wearing Chicago Bears shirts while looking for "everything from signs to gumball machines."

The spring semi-annual Antique Slot Machine, Juke Box and Advertising Show will be held April 5, 6 and 7, in St. Charles, Ill.

Dealers can get information from co-promoter Bob Traynoff at 1-847-244-9263. Show information also is available from co-promoter Kevin Greco at 1-815-353-1593 and at [www.chicagolandshow.com](http://www.chicagolandshow.com).

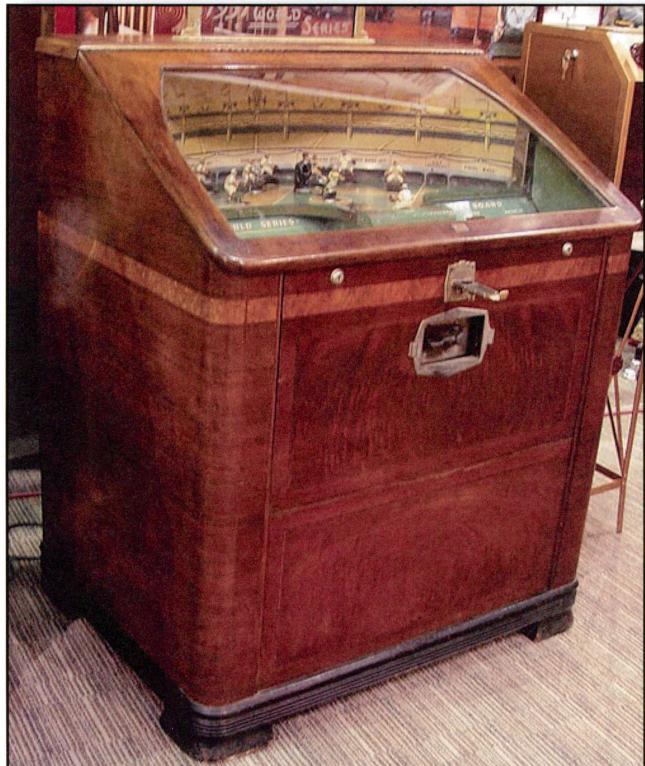
*Photos on next page.*



*Mark Bennet of Roscoe, Pa., pauses for a moment with his Maley Investor wood trade stimulator, priced at \$11,000, alongside a Watling Rol-a-Top slot machine with gold award, priced \$8,500.*



*Dealer Frank Zygmunt Jr. offered a 1910 Mills Double Violino coin op music machine for \$95,000 at the Chicagoland Show.*



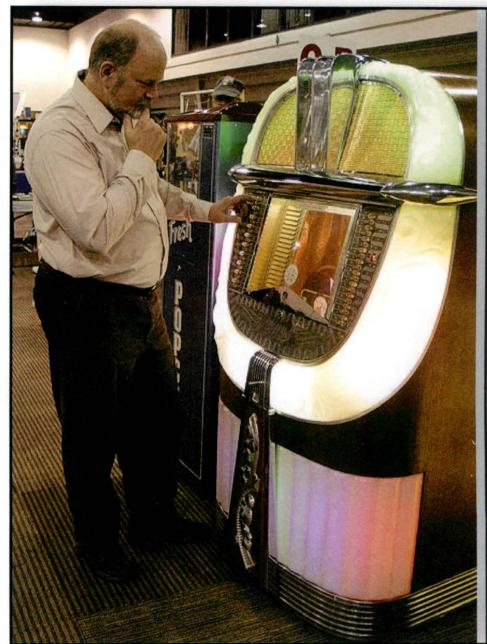
*A 1937 Rockola World Series coin-operated baseball machine, "one of the few originals known" was priced \$47,000 by John Papa of Mayfield, N.Y.*



*David Cogan and son Max, age 8, traveled to Chicagoland from Scottsdale, Ariz., "just to see the show."*



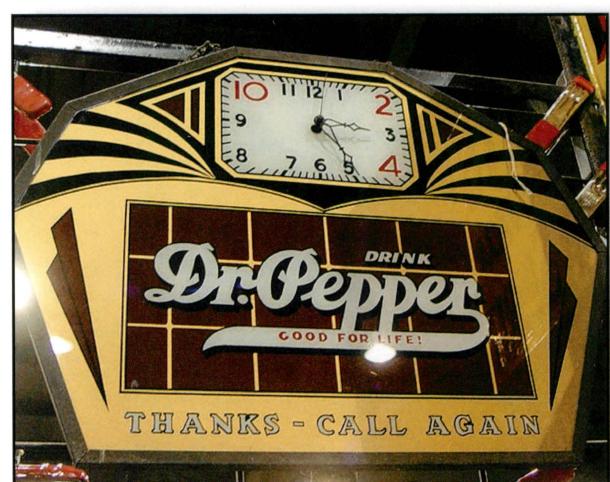
*A 1950s Chicago Twin Bowler, which dealer Mike Hasanou called "one of two known," could challenge skills at your home for \$25,000.*



*Bob Sandage of Louisville, Ky., checks over the selection on his 1947 AMI jukebox offered for \$4,500 at the November show.*



*Miran Cardon of Salt Lake City, Utah, gets ready to make a music selection on a 1939 Wurlitzer jukebox priced \$3,800.*



*A reverse on glass Art Deco style 16-by x 24-inch Dr. Pepper advertising clock could tell time at your place for \$3,800.*

# Jennings Electro-Vendor Baseball, A "Dickens" of a Machine

by Bill Howard

Charles Dickens comes to mind when I think of this machine. In "The Tale of Two Cities," the first sentence of the novel reads "It was the best of times and the worst of times" as Dickens described life in Paris during the aftermath of the French Revolution. Jennings Electro-Vendor combined the best and the worst of marketing ideas.

This machine was produced between 1930 and 1933, when Jennings re-introduced the idea of electricity, as opposed to springs, as the driving force to power slot wheels. After such electric slots as the Berger disappeared after the turn of the Twentieth Century, Jennings, almost thirty years later, became the leader in re-introducing electricity via the Electro-Vendor as a production slot. At first Jennings had to get the "bugs" out of this new concept, so motor power had to be increased to avoid burnouts from the unsuccessful sewing machine-type motors originally used.

So much for the good marketing ideas involved in the production of this inventive landmark. The bad marketing idea was Jennings' assumption that slot players would react favorably to this new concept in the art deco age that simplified play with the push of a button. They did not! Slot players are gamblers, and gamblers like to "control" their fate. The old fashioned handle gave them that "feel" of play that was somehow lost

with the button. It is interesting to note that, even today, with all the electric advances casinos have incorporated into their slots, the handle still remains, even though all are electrically powered, and most no longer accommodate coin play, replaced instead with plastic credit redeemable through script rewards. These clever casinos did not repeat Jennings mistake. In any event, production of the Electro-Vendor stopped in 1933.

This example is featured on page 154 of my book, Every Picture Tells a Story. Author Dick Beuschel called the late 1920s furniture cabinet setting on legs "trashy", but I like the overall appearance of this machine. The walnut finish is beautiful, and the unique light-up feature that illuminates the reels is awesome when left on in the evening by the single flick of a switch mounted on the outside of the cabinet. This example is quite important to me as a collector of vintage baseball machines because it is the only known baseball variation of the Electro-Vendor, a rare machine in the first place. It is in superb original condition. When



I first got this machine, I was alarmed to find that the vendor mech needed to dispense rolls of mints was a "dummy", incapable of vending, and that the baseball reels and inside paper were so nice as to not to appear to be original. I thought that perhaps some "creative soul"

had turned this rare Electro-Vendor into a baseball machine. Not so! Dick Beushel looked at my example and later confirmed in his book on Jennings machines that, indeed, Jennings advertised in its old marketing literature that my baseball variation was available as an Electro-Vendor option. The Electro-Vendor appeared in an ad in the July, 1930 issue of *Automatic Age* on page 9. It was described as "different" and "offering something new" and "intended to be operated with no value amusement checks". "No value amusement checks"? You have got to be kidding! The machine stands 48" tall, 16" wide and 16" deep.

As you can guess, since this machine is in my book, it tells a story, beginning when I got a tip from Mike Gorski many years ago. Mike knew of my thirst for unique baseball machines and mentioned that a very "strange" slot machine might be available near Yellowstone National Park. I contacted the owner and made a deal, sight unseen, something I rarely do. Another friend, partner "B.P." Pierce offered to haul it to Chicagoland on his way back from a trip that had taken him right past the park. We both got a surprise. "B.P." was surprised one way when he discovered the size and weight of this gem that almost consumed all available

space in his mini van. I'll never forget the "joy" on his face as we unloaded it at the show. I was surprised in a more positive way, as I could not believe the "look" and condition of my new find. I immediately hugged "B.P.", forgetting that he doesn't like to be hugged.

Of all the machines in my baseball collection, the Electro-Vendor has attracted the most interest from collectors. Author and baseball expert, Dr. Mark Cooper considers it one of the finest baseball coin-operated machines he has ever seen.

I offer two tips for those who own or are thinking of purchasing an Electro-Vendor. First, the legs are veneered with a walnut finish and very fragile, so do not "scoot" the machine when moving it. Pick it up and set it down. Also, as discussed above, the motors for these machines were "works in progress" as Jennings improved and refined them. Do not overplay or otherwise "tax" the motors. Keep them well oiled and check for faulty wiring. Smoke does not help the look of these gems.

Over the years these Electro-Vendors have become quite popular and have increased in value, particularly when in good original condition.

Thank you, Mike and "B.P.".

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# 26 Years Ago

by Paul Hindin

I was going thru some old catalogs and came across an auction I attended 26 years ago. The auction was held in Milwaukee and consisted of , at that time, an old time coin op, toy and beer collection, Russel Kotenberg... Russ called himself a collector but most that knew him considered him an avid horder... When he passed away there were barns of items that eventually would need to be sold. I am sharing with you some of the hundreds of items that were auctioned off in the 10 session auction. This auction was well attended by collectors from all over the country. Hope you enjoy what prices were in 1986.

This is just a sample of this fantastic auction. Imagine buying a Happy Jap gum vendor back then for \$425.00. Last one sold for over \$20,000.... Where were you in 1986?

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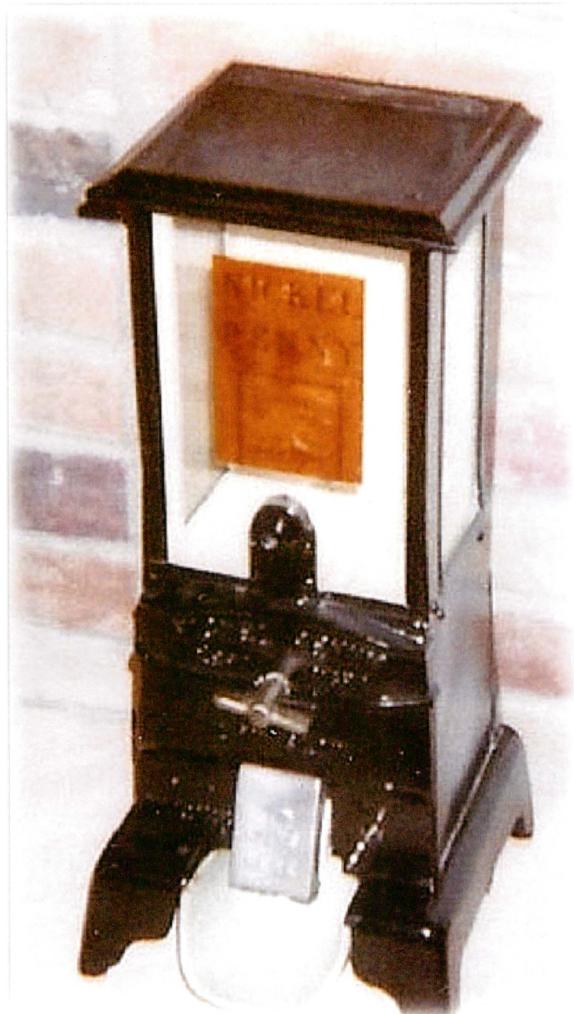
# Brice Williams Find

by John Carini

In September of 2012, my son, Nick, told me about a Brice Williams machine. The machine was 6 blocks from my boyhood home.

I told Nick I wanted the machine for my collection. Nick called the man and checked out the machine (see photo). The machine was in good working condition with keys. Nick bought the machine for \$175.00.

The man told Nick he had the machine for sale at his rummage sale and didn't sell the machine. Lucky for me!





Johnny Duckworth (816) 835-3316

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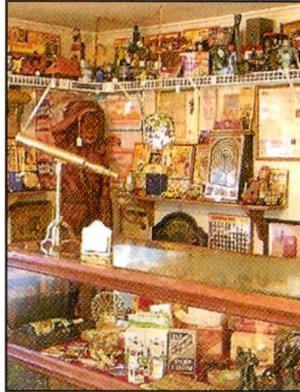
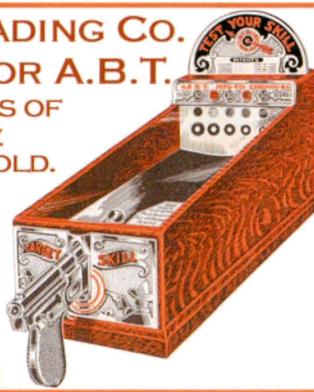
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WANTED: "STEPPED BLACK STEEL TOP" to fit ACE (Operators Vending Machine Supply, Co.) cast iron porcelain gumball machine. Bill Enes Book Silent Salesmen Too, pg. 118. Pictured lower left corner.  
Email: [twharte@earthlink.net](mailto:twharte@earthlink.net) or 909-987-3466. Terry.

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## ----- TALES OF THE HUNT -----

Remember it is up to the members to submit their stories.  
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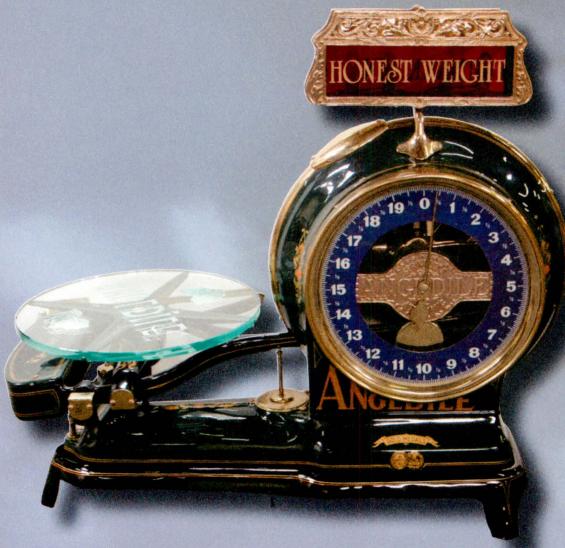
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